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Wayside Gatherings.

History ;

In his new war book Mr. Churchill depicts himself as standing at a Whitehall window on Armistice Day, just before the hour of eleven, waiting for Big Ben to strike : "The minutes passed, ... and then, suddenly, the first stroke of the chime." We are now informed that there were no chimes at 11 a.m. on that day. Big Ben was out of order! History and fact do not always dwell together.

* * *

"Seek ye first. . . . . "

"It is sheer folly to pray, 'Thy Kingdom Come' unless we send men and women to Parliament who will give the Kingdom the chance to come. Frederick Douglas, the escaped slave, said he often prayed for freedom, but that he never got it until his prayers got down into his legs, and he ran away. Prayers must be put into our tongues and carried to the polling station. We must shout for the Kingdom and pray for it, and vote for it. The victory of a political party is as nothing compared with the victory of the Kingdom of God." President of the Free Church National Council.

The Human Factor.

"If Meredith felt that he could trustfully commit himself to the power that has fashioned the rose, how much more may men commit themselves to the Power that has given to them Jesus Christ, with the influences that emanate from Him, and the train of saints and heroes, attended by so great a cloud of witnesses, that have drawn their inspiration from him!" Dr. Scott Lidgett at the Free Church Council Meeting.

* * *

The Hardest Fighting.

"I am an Irishman, and the fighting instinct is in my blood. It cannot be taken out, so it must be lifted up. Men fought with fists and claws, then with primitive weapons, then with aeroplanes and bombs. Now they have to fight with their minds and intellects against the evil that is in the world."—Rev. Studdert Kennedy.

* * *

Where to place the emphasis.

"Sooner or later every Church which plays a worthy part in the world's life must pay attention to the new critical standpoint. The Christian faith has nothing to fear from truth. The beliefs that draw us near to Christ are few and simple. They have little to do with outward rite and external fact. **Hold fast to the simple truths which lie at the head of the gospel,** and you need not fear the consequences of critical scholarship, which, whether you like it or not, will permanently change the way in which the New Testament is approached by educated Christians."—Bishop Barnes.

* * *

One day Adam was returning with his hoe on his shoulder from a hard day's work to his humble cottage. May be it was a cave. Young Cain was running ahead boylike, throwing rocks at the birds. Suddenly they came upon a beautiful garden. "Oh, father," said Cain, "look at that beautiful garden! I wish we could live there." "We did live there" said Adam regretfully, "until your mother ate us out of house and home!"

A. W.

Notes of the Month.

Summer School for Teachers.

We have pleasure in calling the attention of our Sunday School Teachers to the arrangements made by the Northern Sunday School Federation to hold its Biennial Summer School for Teachers at Plas Mariandir, Penmaenmawr, North Wales, from Saturday, June 11th to 18th. These arrangements provide a felt want for Sunday School Teachers. As we have nothing of this nature on this side of the Irish Sea, it may be of interest to our readers to know that our Teachers may join the School. Given the necessary leisure and the desire to equip themselves more thoroughly, we see no reason why a selection of Teachers from our Irish Sunday Schools may not take advantage of this unique opportunity. Some of our Sunday Schools at least could make it possible for good teachers to have the opportunity of conferring with our English brethren on the best method of making our Sunday Schools more effective in teaching the children. The list of subjects to be dealt with is an attractive one, of which these are a selection: "How to use the Bible in Sunday Schools"—Rev. J. Islan Jones, M.A.; "Definite Religious Instruction," Rev. T. M. Falconer, B.LITT.; "The Religious Value of Poetry," Rev. W. P. Phillips, M.A.; "The Teacher and his Tools," Rev. Bertram Lister, M.A., and "The Religious Approach to the Hearts of the Scholars," the Rev. J. C. Ballantyne. Besides the main features of the School the locality of "Penmaenmawr is a pleasant, quiet seaside resort, with easy access to some of the most lovely mountain scenery of North Wales." There will be excursions to Snowdon, Bettws-y-Coed and other places. The fee for the week is £3 3s., including board, residence, admission to lectures, etc., but not to excursions. Those who have attended "Summer Schools in the past were delighted with the excellent blend of profitable instruction with good fellowship, social intercourse, and holiday. We are confident that this year at Penmaenmawr will maintain that high standard." We, on our part, cannot imagine anything more instructive and delightful for our Sunday School Teachers than a visit to this Summer School in the region of Snowdonia. Applications should be made to the Rev. J. W. Lee, 84 Wilton Street, Denton, near Manchester, enclosing P.O. 5/- as booking fee. As accommodation is limited it is important that application be made as early as possible.

"Religious Cults."

When the British and Foreign Unitarian Association met at Liverpool in the Autumn the Rev. Simon Jones, B.A., of Nottingham, drew attention to an important subject when he spoke on "Some Religious Cults of the Present Day." He said "the Cults that embarrassed and harassed the modern churches were like spirits that harassed the Gadarenes—their name was legion." Mr. Jones dealt with two of these as being most worthy of attention, namely, Spiritualism and Theosophy. Both are phenomena that exercise the faculties of a large number of enquirers in many parts of the world, and from that point of view cannot be ignored. There is much searching after the truth during these days, and the need is felt for new light on the mysteries which surround human life and destiny. The speaker emphasised the following points with regard to Spiritualism and Theosophy. "These cults demonstrated man's continued interest in the unseen, and testified that man declined to give up religion. They showed that men were interested more in what was happening now than in things that happened long ago, and in Spiritualism with present phenomena, not dead documents." We believe that there is some foundation for the speaker's statements that "men have ceased to expect anything of the kind from the Christian Church. There was no expectation of new manifestations of the spirit. The power of Spiritualism lay in its claim to demonstrate survival after death. A religion that had no message for the hour of death had no message for life." The speaker went on to say that "Spiritualism had much to teach them: what to explore, but also what to avoid. The timidity of men to examine the phenomena of Spiritualism was understandable. There are things connected with Spiritism which conflict with sound reason, but the speaker emphasised the fact that "Spiritualism had done a service in stressing the imperative need to explore the spiritual nature of man." With regard to Theosophy the speaker had some interesting things to say worthy of the attention of our readers. "Theosophy insisted on the Unity of God, the Universe and Man, and aimed at a synthesis of all the religions of the world.

It had two attractive features, namely, the belief in the coming of a World Teacher and the vision of a world religion. Between the best Theosophists and ourselves there was a community of ideals." The speaker concluded by expressing the opinion that "these cults might not have arisen had Unitarians been true to the genius and spirit of their own movement." We would draw attention to the article on "Theosophy" in this issue, contributed by one who is in sympathy with the movement. We believe that it is both wise and politic to regard with friendliness and an understanding heart all that is best in modern movements.

White Slave Traffic.

The League of Nations assembled in Geneva early in March is to be congratulated not alone for its unceasing pursuit of international amity and goodwill and its courageous efforts on behalf of the peace of the world, but even more, if that were possible, for its solicitude on behalf of moral purity in the social life of the nations. It is gratifying to find that on March 9th the British Foreign Minister, Sir Austen Chamberlain, formally proposed to the League Council the release of the first part of the White Slave Traffic Report, the second part being held back till its contents can be communicated to the various governments. The actual report according to the Press, is of absorbing interest, and in places sensational in character, though that is still more true of the unpublished part. Two paragraphs on the same page of the report tell the story of the traffic in outline:

1. "The traffickers include 'Madames' who manage houses of prostitution, Souteneurs who are mainly responsible for securing girls and controlling their movements; principals who are financially interested in vice districts or brothels, and lend money to 'Madames' and Souteneurs; and intermediaries, who sometimes secure and transport girls for 'Madames' and Souteneurs."

2. "The main routes of traffic appear to be from Europe, particularly Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Roumania, Spain and Central America, and Egypt and North Africa. The traffic reveals itself as a question of supply and demand. How are the girls obtained, how are they transported, and where are they placed? The demand appears to be constant, but fluctuating, women being specially needed in places where the influx of troops, or workers, or even tourists is expected. Here is an example given: One Souteneur said to an investigator, who was, of course, posing as a fellow-trafficer: "Strike out for Panama. The Fleet is expected in January and February. Things in Panama and Colon will be great."

A fact emerges from the League Report how well, comparatively speaking, Great Britain comes out of this grimy business. As has been truly said "there are various reasons for that and a jaunty assumption of a very doubtful moral superiority is one of the least wise and probably the least true explanation of it." The conclusion which the facts warrant seems to be the total failure of the Continental licensing system. It has little or no effect in checking the results of vice; and it is plain from the evidence that it stereotypes and spreads the practice of vice itself, and creates the opportunity of the trafficer in it. The White Slave Traffic is indeed a "mechanism of infamy." The League Council decided to call a Press Conference at Geneva on August 24 when Lord Burnham, it is hoped will preside, to consider methods of closer collaboration between the Press and the League.

Brotherhood.

The Grace of God in your life.
The power of God in your work.
The joy of God in your play.
The beauty of God in your actions.
The peace of God in your rest.
The wisdom of God in your thoughts.
The love of God in your hearts.

* * *

Here lies the tragedy of our Race:
Not that men are poor;
All men know something of poverty.
Not that men are wicked;
Who can claim to be good?
Not that men are ignorant;
Who can boast that he is wise?
But that men are **strangers!**

From "The Path to Happiness,"
by the Right Rev. G. S. Arundale, M.A.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Letters and Manuscripts for the Editor should be sent to the Manse, Killinchy Co. Down, not later than the 15th of each month. The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by correspondents. No letter can be inserted without the name and address of the sender.

"The Right and Duty of Private Judgment in Religion."

(CONTINUED).

We have maintained that the final authority in religion is not a Church or a Sacred Book but conscience. In this, as in many other things, we have been misrepresented. It is sometimes said that because we will not accept as final, everything that orthodoxy teaches, we therefore deny both Church and Bible. This is half a truth that is worse than any untruth because it has the support of plausibility.

The truth is that we gratefully welcome the teaching of both Church and Bible but we reserve to ourselves the right to reject those parts of the teaching which run counter to our God-given sense of judgment as to what is right and wrong. The Church and Bible are our teachers, not our masters —they are our helps ; not our authorities, they assist us to decide what is right and what is wrong, but they do not supersede individual judgment.

None of the world's great religious leaders ever claimed to have superseded individual judgment, indeed they appealed to it. Jesus said, " why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right ? " Paul says very much the same thing ; " Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good."

Many of our religious difficulties are due to the mistaken idea that religion has come from a Sacred Book or from a Church and that to question these authorities is to be false to religion. Never was a greater mistake made. If all the Churches and Sacred Books were swept out of existence to-morrow, Religion would still remain. Man would still feel a sense of awe and wonder when contemplating this illimitable universe—he would still have a deep sense of awe and reverence when pondering over the mystery of life. No Church, Priest or Sacred Book ever created religion but were themselves created by religion which existed in the hearts of men and women long before these things were thought of. Whatever authority these things have has been derived from the spiritual experience of individual men and women.

Put into a few words our position is this. We listen to all who speak in the name of religion, but we reserve to ourselves the right to " Prove all things," no matter whether they come from a Pope or a newsboy, from a Cathedral Pulpit or from a street corner orator, from the Bible or from a daily newspaper. In all things we have a perfect right to use our judgment. We regard as a sacred possession the power of judging between right and wrong, good and evil, truth and falsehood, and we refuse to hand over this power to any Church or Sacred Book.

This does not mean, as is often supposed, that we have no respect for Church and Bible because we will not accept them as ultimate authorities in religious matters. We believe in these things far more than we are given credit for. We believe that the Church is sacred ; we believe that the Bible is sacred, but we do not stop there. We believe that still more sacred than either Church or Bible is the power of judgment with which God has endowed us.

Which is the greatest, we ask, the Church or the power within which enables us to understand and correctly value the teaching of the Church ? Which is most Divine, the Bible or the spirit of understanding with which man interprets it ?

Surely the Inner Authority is more Sacred more Divine than all the external authorities put together. If anything in this world is sacred, individual judgment is. If God had not intended us to reason about religion he would not have endowed us with the power to reason.

Therefore, we listen respectfully to all who speak in the name of religion, whether orthodox or heterodox, and we read with reverence the Christian Bible and other Sacred Literature, but we do not accept these authorities unquestioningly. We do what Jesus suggested we should do, what Paul openly stated we should do, what the wisest men and women of all ages have asked us to do, what our God-given sense of judgment is always prompting us to do, —we " Prove all things " and hold fast, not to all things, but only to those things that are true.

[The above is a summary of a sermon preached in " All Souls' Church," Elmwood Avenue, on Sunday evening, 6th February, 1927, from the text, " Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good."—I. Thess. 5 ; 21.

It is the first of a series on " What we do Believe and Why."

REV. SYDNEY P. WHITEHOUSE.

Temperance Notes.

The Problem of Intemperance.

Why do human beings desire alcohol? Writing in "The Spectator" Dr. C. W. Saleeby gave the following answer to this interesting question." "Since time began the one and only reason for which men have swallowed alcohol—or any other drug of its class—is to promote euphoria." Euphoria, the joy of life, the feeling of well-being, is sought by everybody. Because of poor health, business worries, or fatigue after work, men and women feel depressed and out of sorts. Alcohol uplifts and cheers, troubles are forgotten, the outlook becomes bright and encouraging. Enjoyment of life is restored. That this is the true explanation of the attractiveness of strong drink cannot be doubted and it would be foolish to blame those who have resort to this ready method of banishing care if the happiness thus induced were of a permanent nature, and brought with it enduring benefits. But here there is room for doubt. The pleasing effects pass quickly away, and are succeeded by fresh depression, and this in turn demands to be removed by more alcohol. Thus a craving is easily created which may in the case of weak characters lead to a dependence on strong drink almost impossible to control. This is a very real danger, as all will admit. The problem of Intemperance has arisen because of it. There is a tendency in these days to regard this problem as solved. Drunkenness is seldom seen, and for social purposes the cup of tea in almost every home has replaced the glass of wine. Genuine and welcome progress towards universal sobriety has proceeded rapidly, and the customers of the publican—at least in the villages and small towns—have become so few that kind hearts pity the poor man who must find it difficult to make a living. Still there is point in the suggestion that forces itself on our minds, that so many bars would not be seen unless they were supported. Public houses are not run on philanthropic lines, but as profit-making concerns. Expressions of satisfaction are very well and congratulation in the improved morals of the present day as compared with bygone times is pleasing when it has solid ground to rest upon; but in our complacency, is it not possible we may be crying 'Peace, Peace!" when there is no peace.

What of the honest and obliging shopkeeper whom we deeply respected and liked; with whom we found it so agreeable to do business; who now to our grief is frequently in a maudlin state, endangering not only his own health, but the happiness of his wife and young children, and the success of the business built up by years of hard work? What of that other man with a large family crowded into a small house without any decent accommodation, who once held a good position but lost it, whose money has all gone for drink, who merely works casually and whose wife has often to beg for herself and children? And what of that very young man known intimately from childhood, whose home was of the best kind, whose education was carefully watched; who went out to take his place in the world with great promise of usefulness, and who, today, though still in his twenties is little better than a loafer about the street corners? These examples, which are not imaginary, force us to recognise that there is still a problem of Intemperance. Doubtless most readers are acquainted with equally sad instances of wasted and ruined lives. The evil is not so widespread as it was twenty years ago, but it is sufficiently urgent to call forth most earnest effort for its removal. Uneasiness must be caused, too, by the report that the Imperial Parliament is likely in the immediate future to reduce the tax on whiskey. The high price has been of the greatest assistance towards sobriety, and if reduction of duty should lead to lower retail prices, as it undoubtedly would, the result might well be disastrous to the best interest of the community. Consumption would probably increase immediately, and much of the ground won might be again lost. Children would quickly realise the change, for boots and stockings would be wanting, and tables left without accustomed luxuries, to say nothing of necessaries. Certainly, there can be no justification for the abandoning of any useful work in the direction of touching the consciences of the people as to the danger threatening themselves and their families. Science has investigated the nature and effects of alcohol, and its findings, ought to be published widely. Since Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson carried out his epoch-making researches, the attitude of the medical profession on this matter has entirely changed. Sir Benjamin had himself used alcohol in moderation, and had prescribed it for his patients, but as a result of his

experiments he changed his opinion regarding its usefulness, became an abstainer, and an ardent advocate of a similar attitude on the part of others. Everybody once believed strong drink to be a helpful stimulant. There is no excuse to-day for such a mistaken view. One of the conclusions arrived at by the Advisory Committee of the Central Control Board in 1917 was " that the action of alcohol on the nervous system is essentially sedative, and with the possible exception of its direct influence on the respiratory centre—is not truly stimulant. The popular belief in the stimulating properties of alcohol, as regards nervous and other functions, seems to be of purely subjective origin and illusory. The apparent stimulation is in the main, if not wholly, an effect of the narcotic influence of the drug, which as we have seen dulls the drinker's perception of unpleasant conditions in himself and his surroundings, and may make him feel better, more efficient and stronger than he really is."

Professor J. A. Lindsay of Belfast University, at a meeting at which he was presiding some time ago, summarised the conclusions of medical science regarding alcohol, and as his knowledge and right to speak on this subject will not be questioned his deliverance is here quoted as reported by " The Northern Whig,"

(1). Alcohol was essentially a narcotic ;

(2) Medical science was agreed that the food value of alcohol, though not to be entirely denied, was very small ;

(3) Medical Science was prepared to admit that the use of alcohol was at all events entirely unnecessary for the normal and healthy individual ;

(4) Recent experiments had conclusively shown that in the case of fine skilled work calling for close observation and accurate manipulation, such work was less well performed if alcohol was taken even in moderate quantities ;

(5) Medical science held that the usefulness of alcohol in their profession was a very circumscribed and limited matter. In proof of that contention it was a remarkable fact that in practically all their great hospitals, including their own Royal Victoria, the amount of alcohol at present used as a therapeutic agent was only about one-third or perhaps only one-fourth of what applied thirty or forty years ago, a very significant indication indeed of the trend of medical opinion ; then medical science held that alcohol was sometimes of service in conditions of extreme exhaustion and fatigue, in certain septic conditions, in the critical periods of some febrile illness, and sometimes convalescence ;

(6) One of the most significant facts in the whole question, medical Science had shown very definitely that the tendency to alcoholic excess was often hereditary."

" SENEX.'

Correspondence.

HINDUS AND CHRISTIANS.

SIR,—Last month's issue gave an anecdote of something alleged to have happened at a railway-station, as showing the difference between Hindus and Christians. Here is another incident, which I myself witnessed at a railway-station which shows the difference. There was a basket containing apples and eggs, on the top of a porter's barrow, being wheeled along the platform. The basket fell off, and the eggs were smashed and the apples rolled in every direction, some of them on to the line. There was a great roar of laughter, all over the station, and I am afraid I wasn't guiltless. The woman who owned the basket made herself heard very soon. The Indian remarked " Oh, poor woman ! why do they laugh at her distress ? "

—FRIEND OF INDIA.

SIR,—It is surely essential when the matter of Students is again being discussed that the facts should be made clear.

Almost a year ago an appeal was made for Students. Last Autumn a Student came forward, a son of the manse, who had already entered the University, and who received the hearty approval of his Presbytery. Under the advice and guidance of the Presbytery, and when told to do so by them, this Student applied for a Bursary. The astonishing result was that he was told by return post without even an expression of regret that he was too late and could apply again in 12 months. The Rules which made this application late were drawn up by the Association. The Presbytery which advised the Student forms one third of the Association. The other two thirds and the Trustees are certainly of the opinion that the Student should get this Bursary, and yet months have passed and the Student

is waiting still. Not only does it seem rediculous that a body cannot make exceptions to or amend its own rules when it seems necessary, but the amazing thing is that when a meeting was called to discuss Students' Bursaries any mention of this case was declared out of order. The Student's own Presbytery which might have been expected to show a solid front seemed as uninterested as anyone else and the Meeting seemed quite satisfied with the assurance from two ministers that somehow, sometime, from somewhere, the student would get a grant of some kind. He has not got anything yet, after seven months.

As was said, the like could not happen in any other denomination. There is nothing whatsoever, to prevent this Student, incidentally the only one we have, receiving his Bursary inside one month even if legal experts do continue to point out difficulties which they might be expected to help us to remove instead. If the same willingness to get this Stduent his Bursary were shown, as has been shown to raise difficulties he would have had it long ago. In reply to "Hibernian" let me say that this is not the first time this has happened. Some years ago a student waited eighteen months for a Bursary to which he was entitled having been granted it before the War. There was nothing "Electrical" at the Association meeting. Of the half hour alloted to discuss students of the future, which we might never have, twenty minutes were spent on roll call, Scripture reading, etc., and not more than half the members of the Association were interested enough to be present. I am convinced that it is ignorance of the facts which accounts for this, hence my reason for writing. You will perhaps excuse me for pointing out that every word of a letter which I wrote to your paper before this case came up and which was severely criticised has now been justified in the very first student who has come forward since it appeared. Once more, I repeat no minister can have any confidence in advising a boy to come forward at present. We have funds for students. We need students more than any other Church. When we get them we treat them as above. I hope any critics of this letter will begin with the fact that our only student has had to complete his first year without a grant because he applied for it a fortnight late under the advice of those who made the very rules under which his grant was refused. No one would question the giving of the Bursary, because the application was late. Several people, including a Trustee are willing to accept full responsibility in case the grant should be questioned, but it is refused. If this is not Red Tape, what is?

A. L. AGNEW.

Theosophy.

The Editor has kindly suggested that the words of appreciation with reference to Theosophy, by the Rev. Simon Jones, B.A., of High Pavement, Nottingham, in stating that justice has not been done to Theospohy, in the attitude that has so frequently been taken with reference to the subject, might be made the occasion of a few remarks. It is claimed for Theosophy that it unites all religions, on a common basis. About forty years ago, that was true with reference to almost all Christian denominations, Catholics and Protestants, they were united in a campaign of denunciation, echoing the anathema against Theosophy, "as being of the Devil," to use the words of Father Clarke, S.J., in the Church of the Holy Name, in Manchester.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

HYMNAL

We would remind our Congregation that the New Hymnal is suitable not only for School use but for Special Services, viz:—

Harvest Festival Services, Flower Services, Sunday School Anniversary Services and Bands of Hope.

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But, one word for Father Clarke ; he did not attempt to deal with the subject, to which he devoted a course of four sermons, without studying the subject, and that was far more than could be said of many other preachers. From Land's End to John O'Groats, the pulpits rang with denunciation, and Theosophy thereby received a magnificent advertisement. Father Clarke visited the Headquarters in London and had long talks and discussions with members of the Society. He was a friend of one of them, Dr. Carter Blake, Professor of Comparative Anatomy and Anthropology, the assistant of the famous Professor Owen. Mrs. Besent in the Memorial Hall, Manchester, replying to Father Clarke, paid him the compliment of having put forward the fairest and most complete exposition of the subject, which had been made outside of the Theosophical Society ; only, as a Roman Catholic priest, he was bound at the end to pronounce it " Anathema." A Vicar in the North of England stated that " Theosophy was Christianity without Christ ; " the editor of a newspaper, commenting on the sermon, replied, " Theosophy is Christianity with Christ, but without the parsons."

A Convention of the Theosophical Society to-day, however, generally shows in its company a number of clergymen, of various denominations, which indicates that time has brought changes.

In the early days, Colonel Olcott, the President Founder, at a time when the Theosophical Society was numerically small, was informed by one of the Cardinals, when in Rome, that Pope Pius IXth, when told of the Colonel's presence in Rome, remarked, " Theosophy is the only thing that the Church has to fear." To-day, Theosophy is banned as heresy. The Church of Rome is not afraid of Protestantism or Agnosticism ; but, it does consider Theosophy a grave danger, as it undermines its claims of exclusiveness, and proclaims the religion of the Spirit as against the religions of Authority.

Theosophy opens up the largest literature of any subject in the world. The finest Oriental Library is that of the Theosophical Society at Adyar. Not only in religion, however, but, in science as well, it appears as a stimulus and an illumination.

Masonry, in its universal aspect, is a witness to the vast antiquity of the Ancient Wisdom, and of the tradition of the Initiation, which is its soul and spirit. The core of it is in the words. " The knowledge of God is eternal life." —F. T. S.

Subscriptions towards Extinction of Debt on Magazine.

Previously Acknowledged ..	£50	6	1
Comber Congregation ..	3	0	0
Mrs. Jane Kell, Templepatrick	0	5	0

Further Subscriptions will be gratefully received.

Reports.

BELFAST DOMESTIC MISSION.

The Annual Services were held on Sunday March 6th, the special preacher being the Rev. C. M. Wright, M.A., of the Ancient Chapel of Toxteth, Liverpool.

Speaking at the First Presbyterian Church, Rosemary Street in the morning, Mr. Wright said that there were two " signs of the times" which might lead future generations to look back upon these critical days in which we are living as a period when a " New Reformation " in religion began to take place. First, there was a rising demand everywhere that religion should not be a mere echo of the past, but that it should be adequate to the needs of to-day—a vital and vitalising power making itself felt as a guiding and controlling influence in all the problems of the home, the city, the nation, and in international relationships. And, secondly, an equally strong demand that religion should not be regarded as a mere department of life—one interest in many—but that it should run through the whole of life and be comprehensive and all-inclusive in its range. What we are seeing today is the speeding-up of a process which has been going on for a long time, namely, the casting aside of non-essentials. Everywhere there is a demand for reality, for a religion that works. There is increasing condemnation of a public worship which seems unrelated to the ugly facts of life. The cry is " Let your religion be the practice of your life." A workman shows his religion by the way in which he does his work ; a manufacturer by the way in which he manages his business; a novelist by the tone of his books, " By their fruits ye shall know them," That is the stern, inescapable test of the Christian and there is no other. This test is being applied more and more, and this is the

"New Reformation," which is now taking place.

Speaking in the evening at All Soul's Church, Elmwood Avenue, Mr. Wright based his address on Dr. W. T. Grenfell's remarkable book, "What Christ means to me." He described how Greenfell's life was changed when a young medical student; and how Grenfell had now become famous as "Grenfell of Labrador." The Christian religion was pictured not as an "affair of folded hands and solemn tones," but as a romance, an adventure, which provided men and women with the real "fun" of life—a fun that lasts, leaves no bitter stain, no consciousness of opportunities lost. Christianity to Grenfell is a way of life, here and now in this world. Christianity demands that we should do our work well. "I am certain that when Christ made windows in Nazareth, they did not misfit and jam."

The Annual Meeting took place the following night in the Central Hall, and we are indebted to the "Northern Whig," for the following report of the proceedings.

Lord Justice Andrews who presided, proposing the adoption of the annual reports, said that the reports spoke for themselves as a record of hard, solid work, He had difficulty in conceiving any year, in which greater strain would be put on mission work. Ever since the cessation of hostilities there had been an amount of industrial unrest in the United Kingdom, which had been productive of geart distress, and, although he was happy to think that in Northern Ireland they had perhaps suffered less than other less fortunate parts of the United Kingdom, it was impossible to think that the past few years should have gone without a considerable amount of distress.

It was in such times, that the work of the Mission was most difficult, but it was in those same times their work was most useful. He spoke also of the difficulty of making special appeals, and went on to state that the clouds of industrial unrest and distress in the city were perhaps disappearing.

He thought that with the revival of trade in their midst the work of the Mission would be less, but at the same time he did not wish to say anything which would in any sense encourage any relaxation of their efforts. There was no doubt from time to time fluctuations took place in trade and prosperity of the community, and, therefore, their work of the Mission must be continued, and must be marked with the same enthusiasm which had characterised it in the past. If that were so it had before it the same success as it had met with in the past.

Mr. Harold Thomas, seconding, said the fact that the Mission was open every night in the week showed that everything was being done to carry out the purpose for which it was founded.

Mr. B. Malcolm, M.I.C.E., proposed, and Rev. A. O. Ashworth seconded, a resolution of thanks to Mr. Kirkham for the faithful manner in which he had carried out his missionary duties, said that the success of the Mission was in no small measure due to his unfailing energy and enthusiasm.

On the motion of Mr. J. H. Gilliland, seconded by Mr. D. Lockett, the general committee and the ladies committee were re-elected.

Votes of thanks to the workers, lady collectors, and Dr. M. B. Smyth, were passed on the proposal of Mr. A. Jennings, seconded by Mr. R. Kennedy, while his Lordship was thanked for presiding on the motion of Mr. R. M. Laird and supported by Mr. Thomas.

The annual reports were presented by the Hon. Secretary (Mrs. E. R. Jackson), the statement of accounts by Mr. J. Mackenzie, and the missionary's report by Mr. N. Kirkham.

Mrs. Jackson said the general work of the Mission was being carried on with quite satisfactory results, although the conditions in the city had rendered Mr. Kirkham's duties more arduous.

New subscribers had not come forward to the extent required. An appeal sent out in February had the unsatisfactory result of producing only £7 11s. in annual subscriptions, only 22 replying favourably out of 144 appeals.

It was hoped that with the realisation of the useful work the Mission was doing there would be certain belated responses so that the Committee would not be hampered in their social welfare work for the poor of the city.

Mr. J. Mackenzie said that the expenses were £402 and the credit balance was £15.

Mr. Norman Kirkham, in his missionary report, dated that he wished to knock on the head some of the nonsense about modern youth. It was his experience that the modern youth, given the opportunity was as noble as his elders had been. They had the ideal that "atmosphere" was of vital importance, and they prided themselves

on the fact of having such an atmosphere of homeliness.

Replying to a vote of thanks, proposed by Miss Hutton, and seconded by Mr. V. Jennings for preaching the annual sermon Rev. C. M. Wright, M.A., Toxteth, Liverpool, remarked that both foreign and home missions had changed, and he therefore asked what was a mission? He felt his own church was a mission. If it was not it was not doing its work. They could imagine an institution in a big city like Belfast supported by the citizens, and yet it would not be a mission because it was engaged simply in looking after the bodily welfare of the people. A mission he defined as a religious centre with a civic circumference. The mission was still needed to touch the lives of scores and hundreds of people who were not touched by the ordinary church or ordinary civic activities.

BELFAST YORK STREET.

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation was held in February. It was reported that the membership was the largest in the history of the church, there being 270 active members on the Roll, an increase of 210 in three years. The church during that period has been entirely renovated and the funds raised amongst the members. A handsome new stair-case has just been completed at a cost of £70. During the year the Congregation visited Ballycarry, Dromore and Moneyrea. The Sunday School is in a satisfactory condition. The Church Guild has had a successful year. Amongst those who have spoken at it have been Sir John Campbell, Dr. Hunter, Profssor Small, Dr. M'Connell, Senator Dorman, Mr. A. R. Hogg, and Mr. Wm. M'Mullen, M.P. The attendances, especially at Evening Service, are now so good that even without any advertising we are unable to find seats for all. It is unfortunate that on special occasions we have always to turn people away. The building of a gallery is beyond the means of our people at present.

We should like to point out to friends in the country that they are always welcome to the Church Guild on Saturday evenings and that tea can be provided for them on Sundays at the Social Meeting which follows the Evening Service. Cars can be left in York Street. York Street was originally intended as a centre for country visitors and we desire to continue that tradition. We should also be glad to hear from Country Churches with whom a visit may be interchanged in the forthcoming summer. Two invitations have already been accepted.

We have to congratulate two of our members, Mrs. Maitland and Miss I. Calwell on taking their degrees of M.B., B.CH., B.A.O.

—A. L. A.

Ballydorn School, Killinchy. A Dramatic performance of "The Drone" was given by the Killinchy players in the Lecture Hall on behalf of Ballydorn School on Saturday, February 19th, when a large audience assembled and thoroughly enjoyed the comedy. In announcing the previous performance we regret that one of the chief characters was inadvertently not mentioned. Mr. Frank Osborne gave a very realistic representation of the careful and precise Housekeeper, Sarah M'Minn—a very important character in the piece. The arrangements for the entertainment were carried out by the teachers, Miss Thompson and Mrs. Bishop.

Killinchy.—The Annual Congregational Meeting was held on Thursday, February 17th. The ladies had made preparations for Tea at 7 p.m. when a good congregation were present to enjoy it. In addition to the members and their families the Sunday School Scholars were present to receive book prizes for regular attendance during the past year. The Minister presided at the Annual Meeting and referred to salient features in the events of the past year. He was pleased to be able to say that the church and its institutions are holding their own well in spite of agricultural depression, and that the general condition is satisfactory. Improvements have been made to the Lecture Hall, and renovations to the Church roof are in progress. A consequence of the prevailing economic uncertainty is the number of young people who are continually obliged to emigrate. We have lost a number of vigorous young people during the past two or three years. The Treasurer's financial statements and the Sunday School balance sheet were submitted, received and adopted. The Committee were re-elected, the members being the same as last year. The Secretary, Mr. John H. Fitchie and the Treasurer, Mr. Thomas Lindsay were thanked, for their services during the past year and were unanimously requested to continue in office. Prizes were distributed to the Sunday School Scholars, by Miss M'Ilwrath, Mr. William

Stewart entertained the company by singing two songs which were greatly appreciated. The singing of the Doxology and the pronouncing of the Benediction brought a very happy meeting to a close.

A Social Meeting and Presentation.

About 40 people met together in the Lecture Hall on Saturday evening, February 26th, to bid God-speed and bon-voyage to four friends who are seeking fresh fields and pastures new under the Southern Cross. The company desired to wish them every happiness and prosperity in New Zealand to which country they are bound. Tea was dispensed and enjoyed in friendly intercourse from 7-30 onwards. The chair was occupied by the Rev. D. J. Williams, who said, "We are not hanging our harps on the willows to-night, or lifting up a dolorous cry. Our friends are not going to a foreign country, though a distant one, nor among alien people, but into the midst of kith and kin who inhabit the countries of the Southern Hemisphere. A large number of families from every part of the British Isles are emigrating to the dominions, but we hear of no cheerless people departing from their native land, but rather bright, hopeful men and women looking forward with eagerness to the prospects before them. It is in this spirit we wish every happiness and prosperity to our four friends. The two younger members, James and Tom Stewart, have grown up in our midst and have been familiar figures in our church, Sunday school and other connected institutions. James Stewart the elder of the two has been prominent in every good word and work. He has endeared himself particularly to us because of his helpfulness in the Choir, Sunday school and the social life in our midst. His friends mark the occasion by presenting to him momentoes of his intercourse with them. They recognise in him a fine type of young man who has filled a manly and loyal part in all activities connected with this Church." Mr. Frank Bishop on behalf of those associated with him in the dramatic society expressed the good wishes of all for his happiness and prosperity in very friendly and cordial terms. Mrs. James M'Connell in graceful and felicitous words then presented Mr. James Stewart with a gold watch and an elegant pocket-case on behalf of the subscribers. Afterwards a happy evening was spent.

Larne and Kilwaughter—The Annual Meeting of the above Congregation was held in the School-room on Friday, February 18th. After the meeting had been opened by prayer and the singing of a hymn, the Rev. J. Begg expressed apology from the Rev. J. Kennedy, who was unable to be present on account of his indisposition. An excellent tea was provided by the ladies, and there was a large attendance of the members and friends of the congregation. The Secretary in his report, outlining the year's work, emphasised the satisfactory condition of the Sunday Schools and other institutions of the Church. The Sunday Services were being well attended, and there were evident signs of zeal and enthusiasm amongst their workers which made the labour of the Committee and Church officers very encouraging. The Treasurer's report showed the finances of the church to be in a sound and satisfactory state in spite of a year of more than ordinary expenditure.

The Committee and Office Bearers were appointed until the next Annual Meeting, and votes of thanks were passed to those who had given their services in the past year. A short programme then followed and the meeting was brought to a close with the Benediction.

Mountpottinger.—The special Musical Service for February was held on the 20th of that month when Mr. H. Shepherd's Orchestra of over 20 performers was in attendance and in addition to playing the tunes for the various Hymns contributed the following musical items at the close of the regular service.

Overture—"Poet and Peasant."
Trombone Solo—"The Pilgrim."
Cornet Solo—"Nocturne in F."
Overture—"Ivanhoe."
Reverie—"In a Monastery Garden."

Miss Jean Bennet was the Soloist and sang "Hold thou my Hand." A large congregation was present and evidently appreciated the work of the musicians.

On the last Sunday in February and the first Sunday in March, the Minister preached special sermons in the evening, taking as his subjects two Plays. The first was Shaw's "The showing-up of Blanco Posnet" and the second Barrie's "The Admirable Crichton" and in each case he brought out the points of religious significance to be found therein.

A Dance organised by members of the Choir was held in the Schoolroom on March 2nd when a very wet night adversely affected the attendance but those present had quite an enjoyable time.

Obituary.

MRS. ELIZABETH JONES.

The Unitarian community of Belfast has lost a most loyal member, by the death on February 24th of Mrs. Jones, after a lengthened illness attended with much suffering. I first knew her as a member of York Street congregation, upwards of 36 years ago, when she was tending her father on his last sick bed. He died in 1896, and there was a few years of respite from her nursing but soon again she became her mother's faithful nurse, until she died, 1906. Her sister married Captain Watters, and after some years Mrs. Watters developed an incurable disease from which she suffered agonies for many long years, and Mrs. Jones was her devoted nurse. A son and daughter were born to Captain and Mrs. Watters and the daughter became the victim of a serious disease, and mother and daughter were in the unremitting care of Mrs. Jones. Captain Watters after some years was unable to carry on his work and he became an invalid also and died. His daughter (Miss Watters) died some 3 years ago, after a great deal of suffering. Her tortured mother survived 2½ years more. While nursing others Mrs. Jones went about in failing health herself, rarely complaining, her chief anxiety being to relieve others. Early in her married life she lost her husband. Through all these tragedies she was an angel of mercy to the afflicted, and preserved a remarkably bright and cheerful spirit, even when in her last years, she was suffering acute pains. Two months ago she became a victim to gangrene in one foot, part of which (in hope to save her life) was amputated. Notwithstanding the operation the disease unfortunately developed rapidly and caused her death.

During all these long years, she retained a living interest in all out churches, and made large sacrifices for others. He who lets no good deeds go unnoticed, has surely written in His Book of Life, her name as one who dearly loved her fellow beings. She was a conspicuous and grand example of practical Christianity, adorning, by her life and deeds, the church she belonged to and the faith she so sincerely believed and loved. She will be sorely missed by a surviving brother, sisters, nephew and his wife towards whom keenest sympathy is felt. Her nephew's wife (Mrs Watters, Jr.) has followed the beautiful example of her deceased aunt, and been a faithful nurse in the joint home. The funeral services were conducted at the house by Rev. M. Watkins, Mountpottinger (whose congregation she joined in recent years) and myself. That at the grave by Mr. Watkins.

ALEXANDER O. ASHWORTH.

Miss Cunningham, Belfast.

Although not unexpected, since increasing weakness had for some time characterized her, the death of the above lady, at her residence, 11 Malone Avenue, Belfast, on March 3rd, was most deeply felt by her relatives and friends. In her home she had exercised a gracious and kindly influence which won her great affection. To that she at all times responded, and her hospitality was ever spontaneous and comprehensive. A life-long member of our household of faith, she had for many years been settled in Belfast, and was a most attached member of the First Church, in Rosemary Street. Until failing health confined her to the house she was most regular in attendance at the services, and it was a matter of heartfelt regret when this became no longer possible. Up to the last she maintained her interest in its work and was always solicitous of its welfare.

The service in the house, on March 5th, was conducted by the Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., as was also the graveside service in Killead, where her remains were laid to rest near those of her forbears, long known and esteemed in that district.

Mr. J. Frazer Lowry, Belfast.

The death of the above on March 16, was the second serious loss affecting an honoured connection in our community. For some time rapidly decreasing strength had made his many friends anxious on his behalf, and made them realise how much his decease would mean. In business and in private life he had a singular capacity for gaining friends, quick to appreciate his integrity of character and his geniality of disposition. Long connected with the flax industry he

had laboured most successfully in Courtrai prior to the war, and not a few in that centre will mourn the loss of a greatly esteemed co-worker. In Belfast where his home was for many years he was widely known and as widely honoured. A familiar figure on the bowling-green, he displayed there the same admirable traits of sympathy and friendliness. The First Presbyterian Church, Rosemary Street, was his honoured religious resort, and he was always keenly concerned for its progress as he was for that of the larger community to which it belonged. With his kindred and friends who have sustained so great a loss profound sympathy will be felt.

The funeral on March 18, was largely attended, testifying to the esteem in which he was held. The service in the house of his son-in-law, Mr. Fred Wilson, Osborne Park, was conducted by the Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., as was also the graveside service in the City Cemetery, Belfast.

Mrs. Hunter, Larne.

On February 15th there passed away at her residence, Thornlea, Larne, Mrs. Hunter, the widow of the late Robert Hunter, M.D., in her 88th year. She was one who bore with wonderful courage and cheerfulness the weakness of advanced age. For a long time she had been confined to the house but she was ever ready to receive her friends, and until quite near the end she had an active interest in things going on around her. Her connection with the Congregation at Larne was a lifelong one. In her younger days she was an enthusiastic Sunday School teacher, and her interest and concern for all that belonged to the welfare of the Church was to the last, practical, sincere and deep. The funeral which was private, took place on Friday, 18th to Cairncastle. The service in the house was conducted by the Rev. J. Begg with the co-operation of the Rector of Inver Church. At the graveside Mr. Begg performed the last solemn services. On the following Sunday, tribute was paid to Mrs. Hunter's memory by the minister. At the close of the service the Dead March was played, the congregation reverently standing.

NOTE.—To Correspondents: Several communications owing to lack of space have to be deferred till next month.

—Editor.

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